

Would Honor Indiana Men for Service in Montford Point Marines

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence spoke in support today of H.R. 2447, a bill honoring the first African Americans to serve in the United States Marine Corps with the Congressional Gold Medal. Now known as the Montford Point Marines, approximately 20,000 men received basic training at Camp Montford Point between 1942 and 1949. Pence noted that there are three surviving Hoosier Montford Point Marines. Pence's statement is below:

"Later today the House will consider H.R. 2447, a bill awarding the Congressional Medal to the Montford Point Marines, the first African Americans to serve in the United States Marine Corps.

"The United States of America owes these heroes a debt of honor that we will endeavor to pay in part today. And I rise in strong support of this measure.

"It was President Franklin Roosevelt who issued an Executive Order in June of 1941 that opened the doors for African Americans to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Between 1942 and 1949 approximately 20,000 African Americans earned the Eagle Globe and Anchor at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina. And we'll honor them today.

"I especially want to commend the Montford Point Marines Indianapolis chapter's surviving members. Since there are no former Marines, allow me to commend Marine Averitte Corley, Johnny Washington and Lancaster Price, along with the late Walter Ezzell and Everette Sweat, who have done yeoman's work in keeping the proud memory of the Montford Point Marines alive in the Hoosier State.

"The Congressional Gold Medal is a fitting tribute to the Montford Point Marines. It marks the service and sacrifice of these trailblazing heroes, but it also marks our nation's march toward a more perfect Union, and I heartily endorse it."

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